Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing
Office of the Gene Technology Regulator

22 July 2013

Issue of licence DIR 121 to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation for a field trial of GM safflower

On 9 May 2013, the Gene Technology Regulator invited submissions on the consultation version of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) for licence application DIR 121 from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The Regulator has issued a licence in respect of application DIR 121, authorising the limited and controlled release (field trial) of safflower lines that have been genetically modified (GM) for increased levels of oleic acid.

The release is authorised to take place over three growing seasons between September 2013 and March 2016. The GM safflower may only be grown in the ACT in the first season, and in the ACT, in Wagga Wagga in NSW, and near Narrabri in NSW in the second and third seasons. A maximum area of 1 hectare per season may be grown in each locality. The primary purpose of the field trial is to evaluate the agronomic performance of the GM safflower under field conditions. The GM safflower will not be used for human food or animal feed.

The decision to issue the licence was made after extensive consultation on the RARMP with the public, State and Territory governments, Australian Government agencies, the Minister for the Environment, the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Committee, and relevant local councils, as required by the *Gene Technology Act 2000* and the corresponding State and Territory legislation.

Issues relating to the health and safety of people and the protection of the environment raised during the consultation process were considered in the context of current scientific information in reaching the conclusions set out in the finalised RARMP and in making the decision to issue the licence.

The finalised RARMP concludes that this limited and controlled release poses negligible risks to people and the environment. Licence conditions have been imposed to restrict spread and persistence of the GMOs and their genetic material in the environment and to limit the release in size, locations and duration, as these were important considerations in the evaluation process.

Appendix A of the RARMP summarises the submissions that were received from prescribed experts, agencies and authorities, and indicates how issues raised relating to risks to human health and safety or the environment were considered in the document. No submissions were received from the public.

A Summary and the finalised RARMP, together with a set of Questions and Answers on this decision and a copy of the licence, can be obtained on-line from the DIR 121 page of the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator's website or requested via the contacts detailed below.

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